

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

1. Name

historic

and/or common Silk Exchange Building

2. Location

street & number 501-11 North Tucker Boulevard

not for publication

city, town St. Louis

vicinity of

congressional district #3--Richard Gephardt

state Missouri

code 29

county St. Louis City

code 510

3. Classification

Category

☐ district
☒ building(s)
☐ structure
☐ site
☐ object

Ownership

☐ public
☒ private
☐ both

Public Acquisition

☐ in process
☐ being considered
☒ N/A

Status

☐ occupied
☒ unoccupied
☐ work in progress
Accessible
☒ yes: restricted
☐ yes: unrestricted
☐ no

Present Use

☐ agriculture
☐ commercial
☐ educational
☐ entertainment
☐ government
☐ industrial
☐ military
☐ museum
☐ park
☐ private residence
☐ religious
☐ scientific
☐ transportation
☒ other: to be converted to offices

4. Owner of Property

name Scott T. Mitchell

street & number 1168 Bay Laurel

city, town Menlo Park

vicinity of

state CA 94025

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. St. Louis City Hall

street & number Market Street and Tucker Boulevard

city, town St. Louis

state MO 63103

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Architectural Survey of Central

title Business District, St. Louis

has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date October, 1975; revised April, 1977

☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☒ local

depository for survey records Landmarks Association of St. Louis, Inc.

city, town St. Louis

state MO 63101

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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Silk Exchange Building
CONTINUATION SHEET St. Louis, MO ITEM NUMBER 6 PAGE 1

2. Missouri State Historical Survey
1982

State

Historic Preservation Program
Missouri Department of Natural Resources
P. O. Box 176
Jefferson City, MO

MO 65102

Continuation of Item 10, Verbal Boundary Description

turning north, continue 150 feet to the south side of Washington Avenue; thence
turning east, continue 40 feet to the point of origin.

Continuation of Item 11, Form Prepared By

2. James M. Denny, Section Chief, Survey-Registration
and State Contact Person
Department of Natural Resources
Historic Preservation Program
P.O. Box 176
Jefferson City

May, 1982

314/751-4096

Missouri 65102

7. Description

Condition

☒ excellent
☐ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Isaac S. Taylor's Silk Exchange Building (1901-02) is located at the southwest corner of Twelfth Street (now Tucker Boulevard) and Washington Avenue. The site (Figure #1) with 150 feet on Tucker and only 40 feet on Washington was purchased in two parcels by the Twelfth Street Realty Company for \$152,000 in 1901.¹ A building permit obtained by the company on August 3, 1901, probably underestimated the construction cost at \$80,000--a deception commonly practiced to reduce the percentage-based filing fee. The buff brick and terra cotta building was completed in 1902 by the Westlake Construction Company and a photograph published in The St. Louis Architectural Club Annual Exhibition Catalog of that year. (Photo #1)

The eight timber posts supporting the wooden beams of the ceilings are exposed on the Twelfth Street elevation by a range of two-story brick pilasters with stone bases marking seven recessed bays between rusticated corner piers. (Photo #2) Above terra cotta pilaster caps, a projecting terra cotta band of small-scale vegetal design separates the base from the six story shaft. Openings at the third story are embellished by pilasters crowned by terra cotta frontons. Narrow terra cotta panels appear at the top of the spandrels between the seventh and eighth stories. Terra cotta cresting above the dentilled brick cornice has survived in spite of the removal of panels which once decorated the parapet wall.

The five-bay side elevations with punched, double-hung windows read as extensions of the corner piers--enfolding the more open Twelfth Street elevation. At the base on Washington Avenue, two story, engaged octagonal columns have been partially sheathed; shorter columns at the loading dock on St. Charles are still visible at street level. (Photo #3) The new owners of the building plan to remove the disfiguring alterations at the first floor and convert the warehouse space to offices.

Taylor, one of St. Louis' most prolific and versatile architects, was born in Nashville, Tennessee. After graduation from St. Louis University with honors in 1868, he worked in the office of George I. Barnett before establishing an independent practice circa 1880. Oscar Enders, who was to sign many of the firm's eloquent renderings, came to architecture through a circuitous path. Born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Enders was a prestidigitator with a circus before abandoning the *métier* for drafting and Chicago. Involvement with the Chicago Architectural Sketch Club brought Enders' talents as designer and perspective artist to the attention of Taylor who enticed him to St. Louis in the 1890's. Enders was President of the St. Louis Architectural Club in 1895; when Taylor became "Director of Works/Architect-in-Chief/Director General" of the 1904 World's Fair, Enders assumed even more responsibility within the firm. Enders continued the practice after Taylor's death in 1917 but returned to Chicago in the early twenties where the last few years of his life were devoted to design work for Graham, Anderson, Probst & White.

The work of Isaac Taylor's office, ranging from straightforward warehouses to artful pomposity in public buildings, cannot be stylistically stereotyped. Masterful design and execution, however, are consistent throughout their portfolio. In addition to the Silk Exchange Building, the Board of Education Building, the Columbia

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Building and Mercantile Trust, important commissions in St. Louis included: The Mercantile Club, Planters Hotel, DeMenil Building, National Bank of Commerce, Liggett and Myers Tobacco Factory, Kennard Carpet Co., the Hadley-Dean Building, Municipal Courts and Jail and the Jefferson Memorial Building.

¹According to the St. Louis Republic (21 April 1901), Part 2, p. 5), frontage on Washington Avenue cost over \$3,600 per front foot.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1901 **Builder/Architect** Isaac S. Taylor, architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Silk Exchange Building was designed in 1901 by the firm of St. Louis architect Isaac S. Taylor. Built in a prime location during the height of St. Louis' pre-World's Fair image consciousness, it is significant as a sophisticated example of excellence in the design of a utilitarian building. The Silk Exchange is also significant as part of the once-bustling Washington Avenue garment and shoe district.

Two important developments intersected in turn-of-the-century St. Louis at the site of the Silk Exchange Building. (Figure #1) One was the spectacular westward growth of Washington Avenue as a linear district of handsome warehouses and factories along the north edge of the Central Business District. The other was the vision of Twelfth Street as a major boulevard in a City Beautiful which would greet visitors to the Louisiana Purchase Exposition.¹ The intersection of Market and Twelfth Streets, where Eckel & Mann's City Hall was built in the 1890's, had already become a focal point for the annual Fall Festival complete with temporary ornament and statuary such as the Statue of Liberty seen in a circa 1892 view of Twelfth Street looking south from Washington Avenue (Photo #4). In the foreground is the site of the Silk Exchange Building with B. R. Bonner's Ice and Coal Shop one of numerous shabby one-story buildings which narrowed the 150 foot expanse of Twelfth Street north of St. Charles Street.²

The land at the southwest corner of Twelfth Street and Washington Avenue was once part of the extensive holdings of Peter Lindell, early St. Louis merchant and real estate investor, whose estate was valued after his death in 1861 at nearly \$3,000,000.³ The Lindell property on Washington Avenue between Seventh and Fourteenth Streets appreciated rapidly in the 1880's and 1890's as St. Louis' traditional economic base of warehousing and distribution expanded to include manufacturing and wholesaling operations. In 1899, The Brickbuilder observed:

Washington Avenue has become a center of the wholesale and light manufacturing interests. When buildings were erected in the vicinity of Ninth Street a few years ago they were considered quite a risk, but almost the entire property to Twelfth Street has been built up with large buildings.⁴

Both the Mercantile Trust Company, which represented the financiers of the Silk Exchange Building, and architect Taylor were among the giants of turn-of-the-century St. Louis. Founded in 1899, the Mercantile Trust Company in less than two years mushroomed in the pre-Exposition building boom to become "the greatest financial company in point of capital and surplus west of the Allegheny mountains."⁵ The Twelfth Street Realty Company which financed the Silk Exchange Building was one of several syndicates of major Mercantile Trust stockholders investing in the acclaimed new construction in downtown St. Louis. "These new buildings have taken the place of unsightly,

(11/78)

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tumble-down properties, and are a striking example of the New St. Louis."⁶ Isaac Taylor was at the peak of his career, with numerous commissions for major offices, factories and warehouses. In addition, he had been appointed to the prestigious and demanding job of supervising the preparation of the grounds and construction of building for the Louisiana Purchase Exposition.

Before construction of the Silk Exchange Building was finished, ownership was transferred to another Mercantile syndicate--the Corner Realty Company. The St. Louis Post-Dispatch predicted that the building, nearing completion in April of 1902, would "assure the magnificent future always promised for Twelfth Street and give evidence, in addition to its being the widest street in St. Louis, that it will become one of the handsomest streets in the world."⁷

The Silk Exchange Building marked a distinct design departure for Taylor's office. In scale, function and underlying timber construction, it belongs to the turn-of-the-century Washington Avenue wholesale and light manufacturing district. Beginning in 1888 with the massive Romanesque Revival building for Rice-Stix Drygoods (1000 Washington) the firm designed no less than seven major warehouses and factories for Washington Avenue.⁸ Monochromatic and sparing in the use of ornament, the Silk Exchange stands in sharp contrast to the other more colorful and embellished products of Taylor's company.⁹ Taylor's chief draftsman, Oscar Enders--considered responsible for the firm's output during the years before the World's Fair--was thoroughly exposed to the aesthetic of the Chicago commercial style before coming to St. Louis to work for Taylor. Enders was also interested in the anti-historicist theories of the Vienna Secession.¹⁰

The Silk Exchange Building was first leased to the Richard Hanlon Millinery Company in December of 1902 and in 1904, was sold by Corner Realty to hotel owner Leo Moser for \$300,000. The building received the name by which it is still known in 1907 when it was leased to Morris Woolf's Silk Exchange Realty Company. Woolf, a merchant of velvet and other silk fabrics, occupied only a ground floor shop at 505 Twelfth Street. Other street level spaces housed a restaurant, a saloon and a corner cigar store. The upper floors of the building were sublet by small-scale clothing and millinery manufacturers, by fabric, button, lace, embroidery and notions merchants and by manufacturers' agents--a pattern of occupancy which continued for over four decades.

Washington Avenue in its heyday was a major United States garment and shoe district (Photo #5). Hotels, restaurants and nightspots catered to the buyers who flocked to the area. The Drygoodsman and General Merchant and The Shoe and Leather Gazette, published until 1918 in offices at 1627-29 Washington Avenue, four blocks west of the Silk Exchange, reported news of the trade with emphasis on St. Louis. The August 28, 1909, issue of The Drygoodsman featuring St. Louis factories included a photograph of women workers on the fifth floor of the Silk Exchange where "Robin's Rompers" and C & C Overalls were made: "That's all we make but we make them right and we make them big."¹¹

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Labor-management conflicts surfaced on Washington Avenue and in the Silk Exchange Building during the Depression. In 1933, Franklin D. Roosevelt's short-lived National Recovery Act went into effect with sweeping provisions to regulate industry, production, prices and wages and to protect labor's right to organize. In St. Louis the N.R.A. program was kicked off in August of that year with a parade of twenty thousand which proceeded east on Washington from 18th Street. International Ladies Garment Workers Union and Amalgamated Clothing Workers organizers had already been busy in St. Louis: "On nearly every block of Washington west of Twelfth Boulevard a group of striking garment workers picketed the factories where they are on strike."¹² Among the strikers were employees of Classy Jeans Dresses, Inc. from the second floor of the Silk Exchange Building.¹³ Though the N.R.A.'s blue eagle symbol disappeared when the Supreme Court in 1935 declared many of the act's powers unconstitutional, the right-to-organize provisions survived and strikes on Washington Avenue continued through the 1930's.

In the 1950's factories began to leave the city for outlying areas accessible by automobile. Federal policies which encouraged suburban residential building and demolition of urban housing stock depleted the labor force; manufacturers, increasingly hard hit by cheap imports, sought rural areas where cheap, non-union labor was available. By 1955, the vast majority of Silk Exchange Building tenants were manufacturer's agents who displayed wares made elsewhere for the buyers in the garment trade. Numerous changes in ownership in the 1960's and 1970's reflected the decline of the district.

The Silk Exchange Building, recently vacated by the few remaining tenants, awaits conversion to office space. Remarkably little altered since 1902, it commands a key position on the streetfaces of both Twelfth and Washington.

FOOTNOTES

¹Architects Samuel Sherer and Louis Mullgardt were among those who envisioned a boulevard lined with magnificent civic buildings, hotels and theatres and a central mall adorned with statuary. St. Louis Architectural Club Annual Exhibition Catalog, 1900, page 4, and The St. Louis Builder 8 (March 28, 1902), n.p.

²Twelfth Street's stately width south of Washington was the result of a five-block long bulge between Market and St. Charles which accommodated the Lucas Market constructed in mid-century and demolished in 1882 as an unsanitary eyesore. William Hyde and Howard L. Conard, eds., Encyclopedia of the History of St. Louis, 4 vols. (St. Louis: The Southern History Co., 1899), 3:1360.

³Glimpses of the Past 4 (October-December, 1937): 165.

⁴The Brickbuilder 8 (April, 1899): 82.

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⁵The St. Louis Builder 8 (July, 1901): 8.

⁶St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 9 February 1902, p. 10.

⁷Ibid., 13 April 1902, p. 10.

⁸The others are the Bee Hat Building at 1021-27 Washington (1899), Curlee Clothing, 1001-07 (1899), Edison Brothers Building (former Kennard Rug) at 408 Washington (1900), the Catlin-Morton Building at 1110-20 Washington (1901) and the Rudman Building at 1228-36 Washington (1901).

⁹While fashionably light colored brick faces the three exposed elevations of the building, there is not the lavish use of historical detail and profusion of terra cotta ornament which was envisioned for Twelfth Street.

¹⁰H. Zimmerman, "Oscar Enders: 1865-1926," Pencil Points 8 (1927): 506.

¹¹The Drygoodsman and General Merchant, 28 August 1909; advertisement, p. 19; photograph, p. 59.

¹²St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 10 August 1933.

¹³Telephone interview with Joseph Moore, Executive Director of Associated Garment Industries of St. Louis, 2 November 1981.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See attached.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name Granite City, IL/MO

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

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7	4	4	0	0	0
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Zone Easting Northing

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Zone Easting Northing

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Verbal boundary description and justification

The Silk Exchange Building is located in City Block 835; beginning at the southwest corner of Washington and Tucker continue along the west side of Tucker 150 feet to the north side of St. Charles; thence turning west, continue 40 feet along said side of St. Charles; thence

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

11. Form Prepared By © Landmarks Association of St. Louis, Inc., 1982.

name/title Jane M. Porter, Researcher and Carolyn Hewes Toft, Executive Director

organization Landmarks Association of St. Louis, Inc. date 4 February 1982

street & number 706 Chestnut Street, #1217 telephone (314) 421-6474

city or town St. Louis state MO 63101

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☒ state ☐ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Director, Department of Natural Resources and
title State Historic Preservation Officer

date

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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B I B L I O G R A P H Y

Architectural Club of St. Louis Annual Exhibition Catalog. St. Louis: 1902.

The Brickbuilder 8 (April, 1899): 82.

The Drygoodsman and General Merchant, 28 August 1909.

Glimpes of the Past 4 (October-December, 1937): 165.

Hyde, William, and Conard, Howard L., eds. Encyclopedia of the History of St. Louis.
4 Vols. St. Louis: The Southern History Co., 1899.

Moore, Joseph. Executive Director of Associated Garment Industries of St. Louis.
Telephone interview, 2 November 1981.

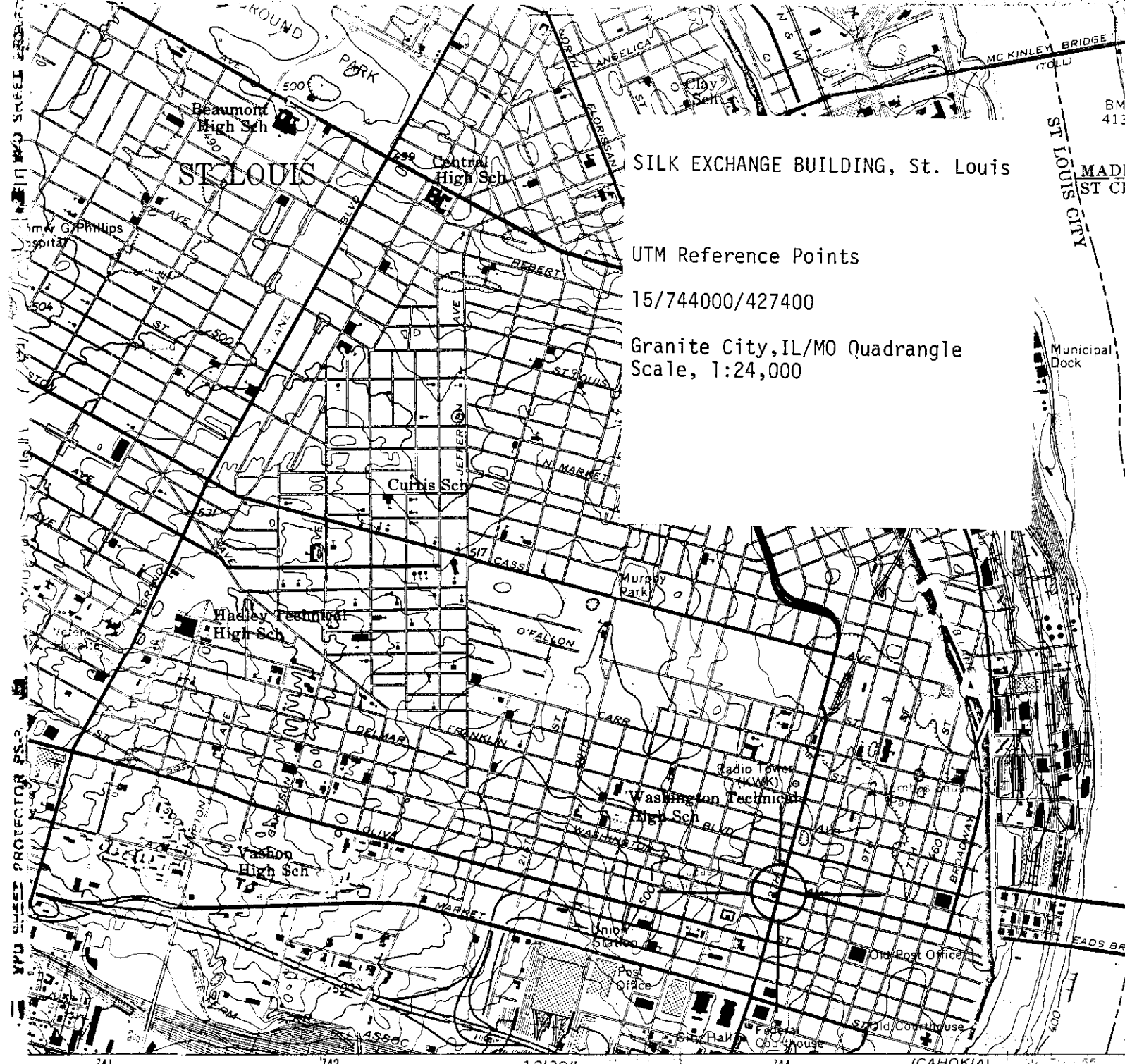
St. Louis Builder, 1 July 1901.

St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 9 February 1902, p. 10; 13 April 1902, p. 10; 10 August 1933.

St. Louis Republic, 21 April 1901, Part 2, p. 5.

Sherer, Samuel S. "Architectural Notes." St. Louis Architectural Club Annual
Exhibition Catalog, 1900.

Zimmerman, H. "Oscar Enders: 1865-1926." Pencil Points 8 (1927): 506.



SILK EXCHANGE BUILDING, St. Louis

UTM Reference Points

15/744000/427400

Granite City, IL/MO Quadrangle
Scale, 1:24,000

Municipal Dock

MADISON ST CITY

EADS BR

4200

4200

4200

4200

4200

4200

4200

4200

gical Survey

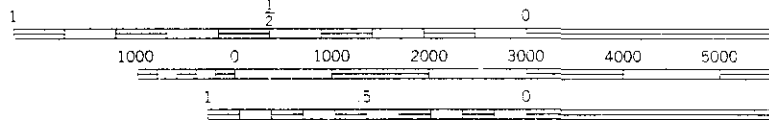
he Geological Survey 1930
rom aerial photographs

frican datum
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for grid ticks, zone 15.

ndmark buildings are shown

1°45' 31 MILS
4° 71 MILS

UTM GRID AND 1974 MAGNETIC NORTH
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET



SCALE 1:24 000

CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
DOTTED LINES REPRESENT 5-FOOT CONTOURS.
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY ST.
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR
STATE GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, URBANA, ILLINOIS 618
AND BY THE DIVISION OF RESEARCH AND TECHNICAL IN-
MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES, ROLLA, MI
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILA

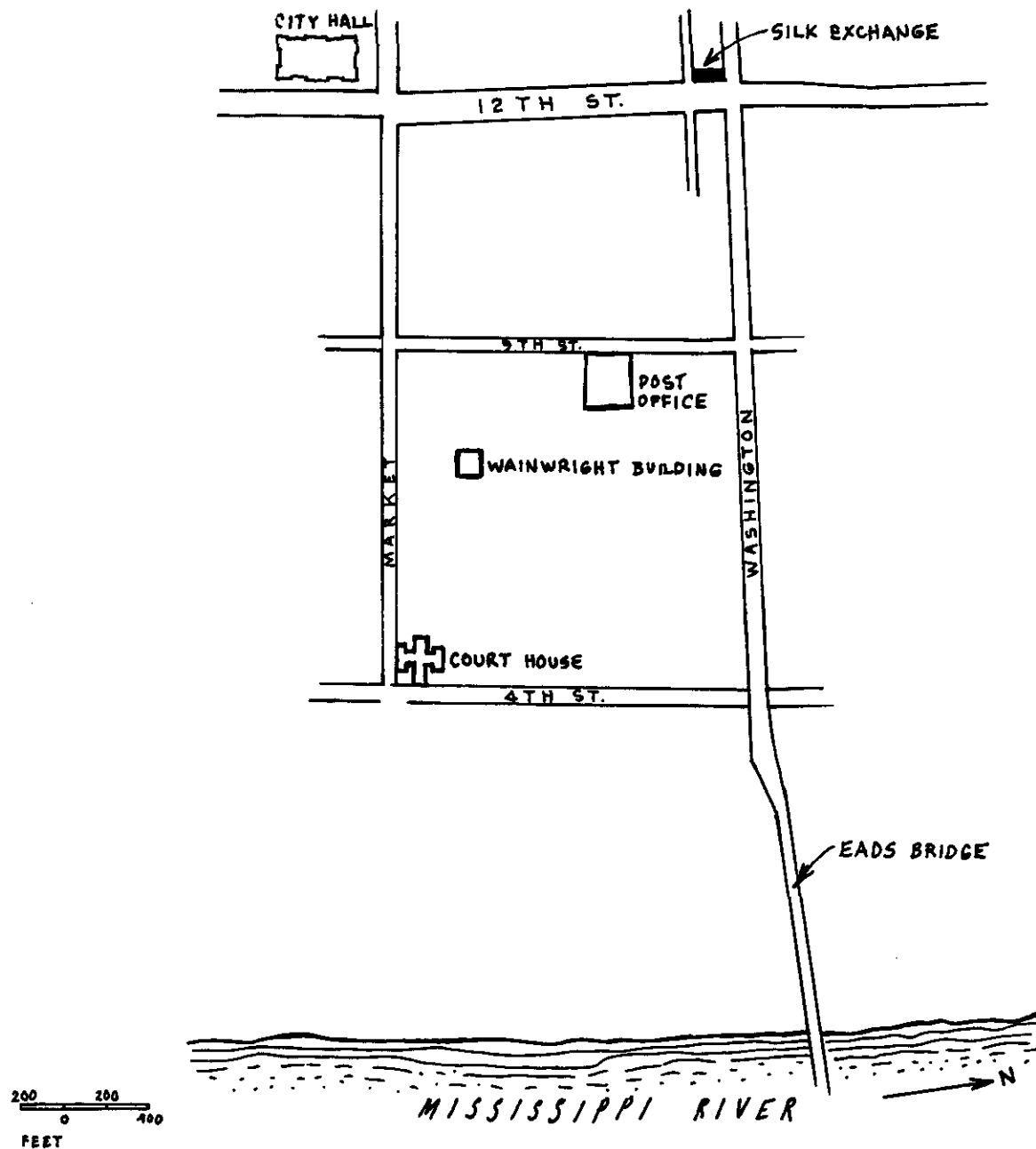
SILK EXCHANGE BUILDING, St. Louis

Figure #1, Location Map: Silk
Exchange Building,
1901

Landmarks Association of St.
Louis, Inc.

Pat Hays Baer, 1981

LOCATION MAP: SILK EXCHANGE BUILDING - 1901
ST. LOUIS, MO.



MAP: PAT HAYS BAER NOV. 1981

SILK EXCHANGE BUILDING, St. Louis
#1 of 5 East (principal) and
north elevations

Date: c. 1902
Photocopy from: St. Louis Archi-
tectural Club Annual
Exhibition Catalog,
1902, p. 64.

Negative: Landmarks Association
of St. Louis, Inc.

Camera facing southwest.



Building, Twelfth Street and Washington Avenue, Saint Louis

Isaac S. Taylor, Architect

SILK EXCHANGE BUILDING, St. Louis

#2 of 5 East (principal) and
north elevations.

Date: 1978

Photographer: Jill R. Johnson

Negative: Landmarks Association
of St. Louis, Inc.

Camera facing southwest.



SILK EXCHANGE BUILDING, St. Louis

#3 of 5 South (St. Charles)
elevation; 1st and 2nd
stories.

Photographer: Jane M. Porter

Date: 1981

Negative: Landmarks Association
of St. Louis, Inc.

Camera facing northwest.



SILK EXCHANGE BUILDING, St. Louis

#4 of 5 View of Twelfth Street

Date: c. 1892

Photographer: Boehl

Photocopy & Negative: Missouri
Historical Society,
St. Louis

Camera facing south from
Washington.

THIS PICTURE MAY NOT BE REPRODUCED WITHOUT
PERMISSION OF THE MISSOURI HISTORICAL SOCIETY.



SILK EXCHANGE BUILDING, St. Louis
#5 of 5 View of Washington
Avenue from Ninth Street

Date: 1903
Photographer: George Stark
Photocopy from: Original in
collection of St. Louis
Public Library
Negative: Landmarks Association
of St. Louis, Inc.

Camera facing west.

